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Compulsory Education.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF PUBLIC CHARITIES

OF THE

STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA,

FOR 1871.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

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G. DAWSON COLEMAN,
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GEO. L. HARRISON,
President.

WILMER WORTHINGTON,
General Agent and Secretary.

Pennsylvania Board of Public Charities
"

COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

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TO THE
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

In the report of this Board for 1870, the last topic presented was that of "neglected children." The Legislature was then appealed to, by the highest considerations of the interest and duty of the State, to make provision for their care and education. "The average of social virtue, dignity and wealth," it was then said, "is much reduced by the presence of this debased and debasing ingredient. And it is a problem well worthy of the gravest and most patient thought of philanthropic political economists, whether anything, and (if anything) what can be done for the rescue of these unfortunates from their ill-starred condition, for the protection of the community which they deteriorate, and for the purity, welfare and honor of the State, the mother of them all."

This evil exists in all parts of the country, but is most patent and pressing in large cities and crowded communities. The remedy—what it shall be, and how it shall be applied, is a subject beset with grave difficulties; but they are difficulties which must be sooner or later manfully met and grappled with. The stability and welfare of the State

and its free institutions, the interests and safety of every citizen, and the weal or woe of the thousands of innocent and helpless victims, are involved in the question and wait upon your solution.

This is an eminently proper subject for this Board to bring to your attention, both as a "Board of Public Charities," and as being required by law to report on the causes and remedies of vice and crime.

No almshouse, no hospital, no asylum or refuge for the poor, the diseased, the insane, the imbecile, the inebriate or the juvenile offender, is more a work of charity, than would be a provision for the care and education of these neglected children. No courts of justice, no prisons or penitentiaries, or houses of correction, or reformatory schools can tend more directly or powerfully to the diminution of vice and crime, than schools and homes for these poor unfortunates, ever growing up in ignorance and pernicious habits, preparing to leaven our whole social condition, and to assist in making our laws.

ILLITERACY OF ADULTS.

According to the census of 1860 (the data of that for 1870 are not accessible), the number of adults who could not read was:—

In the United States, of the whole adult population,	20 per cent.
In the United States, of the white adult population,	9 "
In the United States, of the native white adult population,	7½ "
In New York, of the whole adult population,	6 "
" of the native white adult population,	1½ "

In Massachusetts, of the whole adult population,	7 per cent.
In Massachusetts, of the native white adult population,	$\frac{1}{4}$ "
In Maine, of the whole adult population,	3 "
" of the native white adult population,	$\frac{3}{4}$ "
In Pennsylvania, of the whole adult population,	6 "
In Pennsylvania, of the native white adult population,	$3\frac{1}{4}$ "

It is to be observed, that only the number of the adult population is here referred to in each case.

Of the native white population (adult,) the number of illiterate adults, less their proportion of adults who were idiotic, insane, deaf and dumb, and blind, was :—

In Massachusetts,	— 230
In Maine,	1,507
In Pennsylvania,	34,470

Thus the number in Pennsylvania was five to one of that in Maine, in proportion to the native white population of the respective States; while in Massachusetts the result shows, if the returns are correct, that more than 230 of the idiotic, insane, deaf and dumb and blind adults must have been taught to read, which is undoubtedly the fact. Since 1860, great improvements have been made in the constitution and working of the school system in Pennsylvania, and it is to be presumed that the proportion of illiteracy among her native white population has greatly diminished. Under such circumstances, the much greater proportion of illiteracy among the foreign born population, though a great, is but a temporary evil.

In reckoning the 20 per cent. of illiteracy in 1860, in the whole adult population of the United States, it is to be observed that the slaves were set down, according to their legal status, as all untaught to read, which was then not far from the fact.

NON-ATTENDANCE OF CHILDREN AT SCHOOL.

The number of Children of the school age (from 5 to 15), not attending the public schools at all, was :—

In Massachusetts, in 1869 and 1870,	. . .	9 per cent.
“	average absence of pupils,	19 “
In Pennsylvania, in 1869 and 1870,	. . .	6 “
“	average absence of pupils,	. 33 “
In Philadelphia, in 1869 and 1870,	. . .	12 “
“	average absence of pupils,	. 46 “
In New York (school age 5 to 21), in 1869,	24	“

The number of pupils in academies and private schools, in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, may about balance the number in the public schools, of pupils under 5 and over 15 years of age.

If, then, we make due allowance for the number of imbecile, insane, deaf and dumb and blind, for those taught to read at home, for those detained from school by chronic sickness, for those (particularly between the ages of 5 and 8), not yet sent to school, but who will attend hereafter, and for those (particularly between the ages of 12 and 15), not attending school in the given year, but who had already learned to read in former years, the percentage of absolute non-attendance in these two States will be reduced to a very low figure, probably to not more than one or two per cent., which is quite enough. And the apparent advantage of Pennsylvania over Massachusetts, in the percentage, may, it is not unlikely, arise from some difference in the manner of making the returns.

In Pennsylvania, the whole number of pupils registered in the public schools, *during the whole year*, are reported. In Massachusetts the highest number attending for any time, that is, in the winter schools, is given. In other words, in Massachusetts the highest number attending the summer schools is returned, and the highest number attending the winter schools; but though many pupils attend in summer and not in winter, and conversely, no attempt is made to give the full number of different names registered at both seasons of the year. However this point of comparison may be settled, any doubtful advantage in this respect is more than balanced by our manifest disadvantage in the average absenteeism of those actually registered as pupils.

If due allowance is made for the longer period of school age in New York, it will probably be found that, at least outside of the city of New York, the school system of that State is quite as effective in reaching the whole population as that of either Massachusetts or Pennsylvania.

It is in the great cities, as is shown by the statistics of Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Reading and other large cities, that the greatest proportion of neglected and uninstructed children is found; and in such communities the proportion is appalling. It cannot be less in Philadelphia, after all such allowances as those before referred to are made, than about six per cent. of the whole number of children of the school age; that is to say, about ten or eleven thousand. And the huge and unparalleled proportion of absence to attendance of the pupils themselves, viz., forty-six to fifty-four, is scarcely less appalling.

IGNORANCE AND CRIME.

Ignorance not only entails vice and wretchedness upon the individual, and loss and expense upon the State, but

it is a fruitful source of crime. This might be presumed from the nature of the case, without facts; but facts establish it.

The percentage of convicts in State prisons who were unable to read on admission, as reported in 1868, was:—

In the whole United States,	. . . . .	28 per cent.
In New York,	. . . . .	15 “
In Pennsylvania,	. . . . .	16 “
In Maine,	. . . . .	10 “

How far the result in the nation, as a whole, may have been influenced by the presence of the freedmen, it is not possible for us, at present, to determine; but it appears that, even assuming all the freedmen to be illiterate, the number of uninstructed convicts was nearly three to two of what it should have been in proportion to the whole number of the illiterate population of the United States.

To the percentage of illiterate of the whole adult population, and of the adult native white population, respectively, the percentage of illiterate *convicts* was:—

In New York,	. . . . .	as $2\frac{1}{2}$ and 10 to 1.
In Pennsylvania,	. . . . .	as $2\frac{3}{4}$ and 5 to 1.
In Maine,	. . . . .	as $3\frac{1}{2}$ and 13 to 1.

And after making the proper comparisons, it will appear that, if all the people in these States had learned to read, the number of State prison convicts would probably have been diminished just about ten per cent.

DUTY OF THE STATE.

To furnish the needful education, therefore, to her neglected children, is what the State owes to them—is what the State owes to herself. Charity requires it; prudence and statesmanship command it. And, accordingly, we shall not hesitate to proceed to consider the subject in both these relations.

But when we propose to bring our schools to bear especially on this unfortunate class, we are met, *in limine*, with the objection that our present school system already provides for the whole case; that it offers the means of an elementary education to all who choose to avail themselves of its benefits. This may, in a certain sense, be true; but there are children too young to be qualified or permitted to choose for themselves, and yet the choice made for them determines, it may be, the happiness or misery of their whole lives; determines whether they are to be useful or pernicious members of society; and shall that choice be permitted which imperils not only their happiness, but the welfare and existence of the State?

It is precisely those children whose parents or guardians are unable or indisposed to provide them with an education: It is precisely those for whom the State is most interested to provide and secure it; for other children would, probably, be educated, if the State did not intervene. And as for the children, so far as they choose for themselves, those who neglect the education offered them in the free schools, preferring the pleasures and license of vagabondage and truancy, are precisely those for whom such education is most needed; for a desire for education is next to education itself, in its good effects; and those who determine to have it would, probably, obtain it, whether the State offered it to them or not.

Clearly it is the duty, that is, it is the highest interest of the State, to secure the education of these "neglected children," *if possible*; and the only questions are: Is it possible? and, if so, How can it be done?

To attain the end will, of course, involve something like what is called "Compulsory Education;" and against such a scheme there is started at once a great variety of objec-

tions and difficulties. Are these insuperable? Without argument it might be assumed that they are not; for "where there is a will there is a way." Moreover, it is demonstrated by fact that they are not insuperable; for the thing has been done; and where it has been done, it has never yet been undone or repented of. It is a notable fact that no country or community that has adopted either the system of public schools for all, or that has gone so far as to add to it that of compulsory education, has ever retraced its steps.

THE SYSTEM OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION HAS BEEN LONG
AND SUCCESSFULLY TRIED.

This system has been long established in Norway. During the 400 years of the subjection of this country to Denmark, it may be said that education was much neglected, and ignorance threatened to become universal. The law rendering education compulsory was passed in 1827, the agitation of which was begun in 1814, soon after the independence of the country was secured; and the enactments have been, since that time, rendered more complete, particularly by the law of 1860. The consequence is, that almost every Norwegian can read and write. The school age of compulsory attendance is, for children in the country, from 8 to 15 years, and in the towns, from 7 to 15. Regular attendance upon the common schools is enforced by fines imposed upon the parents. If they persist in neglecting the training of their children, the law steps in, removes the children from their guardianship, and places them in families where they will be conscientiously taught, the expenses being collected from those who should have cared for them. In Norway compulsory education was the immediate result of political freedom.

In Sweden it was an agitation of 10 years in the House of Peasants, that finally constrained the government to take up the subject. Then there arose a remarkable and unanimous opposition from the Bishops. Some held the matter to be absolutely local, and one with which the State should not meddle; others declared that, if schools were established, the people were too poor to send their children properly clad; others maintained that the education of the peasantry should be of a limited character. The Bishop of Lund, that seat of the ancient university, maintained that popular education could not and should not be introduced. The reply of the celebrated poet Tegner, then Bishop of the Diocese of Wexjö, was similar in spirit. To the question, what should the Folk schools teach? he answered, "The culture of the laboring classes ought, principally, to be religious; this, if rightly imparted, includes morality; all other is to be regarded as not only needless, but more hurtful than beneficial." Tegner was at that time 57 years of age, and had been a Bishop about twelve years. Notwithstanding the opposition of the established church, in three years from the time these answers were given, the present system of Folk schools had its foundation in an act of the Diet. By the law of 1842 one such school was required to be maintained in each Sochen, both in the city and in the country. [See the report of the United States Minister at Stockholm.] The result has been that in 1868, 97 per cent. of all the children in Sweden were actually attending the Folk or higher schools, or were receiving certified instruction elsewhere. Compulsory education in Sweden may be carried by law to the separation of children from parents, but this has been resorted to in but few instances, and only where the poverty of the parent rendered it necessary for the parish to support the child.

There is in Sweden a growing sentiment in favor of enforcing universal attendance, avoiding, if possible, the separation of parent and child. Instruction in the Folk schools is practically gratuitous.

In Prussia, also, as is well known, the system of compulsory education has been established long enough to have had its effect upon the training of a whole generation; and it is perhaps the best educated generation that has ever lived, or that is anywhere to be found. No other people have been so universally trained in the elements of learning and useful knowledge. This is the people that has revolutionized Europe on the fields of Sadowa and Sedan; and the success of Prussia in her great contests with Austria and with France, has resulted far more from this educated intelligence of her people than from any warlike arm, or any strategy or military science of her generals.

Austria has been wise enough to take a lesson from her defeat, and imitating the policy of the victor, she has entered upon a course of political and popular improvement, upon a system of liberality and progress, which, if persevered in, will render her a greater nation than she has ever been. One of the greatest benefits yet conferred upon the working classes of Austria is the general school bill of 14th May, 1869, which makes national education compulsory, and greatly elevates the standard of it. In accordance with this law, compulsory attendance at school begins with every child at the age of six, and is continued uninterruptedly until the age of fourteen. But even then, the child is only allowed to leave school on production of a certified proof that he has thoroughly acquired the full amount of information which this great law fixes as the *sine qua non* minimum of education for every Austrian citizen. Nor are any private schools tolerated by the gov-

ernment which do not efficiently provide the prescribed amount of secular instruction; although so long as this condition is fulfilled, the law imposes no limit to private educational establishments.

The misfortunes and miseries of France have taught her the same lesson; and it is now stated, on good authority, that the French republican government has it in contemplation to establish for that country a thorough system of universal compulsory education. Had she established such a system thirty years ago, the name of Sedan would have remained in comparative obscurity; the myriads of her soldiery would have acquired their knowledge of German geography in a more satisfactory way than that in which it was actually forced upon them, and the Paris commune would either have never existed, or would not have found the ignorant mob of idlers and vagabonds that were ready to execute its savage decrees of vandalism and murder.

England, too, has been roused at length from her lethargy. Her elementary education act was passed August 9, 1870. This act of a liberal progressive administration has made a step towards the thorough instruction and elevation of the masses of the English people, which an established church and an aristocratic State, with all the wealth of the richest country in the world at their command for centuries, had neglected or failed to accomplish or even to undertake. This education act includes the compulsory feature, and its detailed provisions, the result of a most exhaustive investigation and discussion, may be referred to as embodying an eminently practical effort towards solving and removing the difficulties which embarrass the subject.

Thus, in Europe, the system of compulsory education has been established in countries chiefly agricultural, and

in others largely commercial and manufacturing ; in countries with a scattered rural population, and in others with cities as large as our own ; in countries comparatively poor and peaceful, and in others of the greatest wealth and warlike spirit ; in countries where the distribution of wealth is most equal, and in others where it is most unequal. And, wherever it has been tried, it has proved successful and satisfactory ; no retrograde step has been taken or even thought of.

Nor is it in Europe only that the system has been introduced. Massachusetts has, for several years, been trying it with some limitations, but with a constant and increasing tendency towards a more stringent and absolute enforcement of the rule, and with eminently satisfactory results. Not only Massachusetts, one of our oldest States, and, side by side with our own Pennsylvania, the very cradle of American freedom, and where the ancient fires of liberty still burn as brightly as anywhere else in our independent country ; not only old Massachusetts in the East, but Nebraska in the West, one of the most youthful States in the Union, where the life-blood of liberty and progress is throbbing with fresh and buoyant energy, Nebraska has, by the framers of her Constitution, sought to engraft this feature upon her school system, in her fundamental law ; a provision, however, which has been made prospective, in consequence of the rejection of the Constitution because of an objectionable feature in the article on taxation.

The Superintendent of public schools in Massachusetts reports, in 1870, that the law for the suppression of "truancy," as applied in Boston, is "working satisfactorily." The city is divided into ten truant districts, one truant officer being assigned to each district. These officers are expected to give their whole time to the investiga-

tion of cases of truancy reported to them by the teachers of their respective districts, and in securing the attendance of absentees; that is, of children whose names are not enrolled in the schools, and who are, therefore, not known, technically, as "truants." Massachusetts, also, requires a certificate of a certain number of months' attendance in school, as a condition of the employment of children in any manufactory.

The Massachusetts Board of Education, in their report of 1871, say:—

"By the present law, attendance at school for three months in each year is rendered compulsory for every child between the ages of 8 and 14, except in certain special cases, while the towns are required to maintain their schools at least six months in each year.

"The Board recommend that the statute be changed, so as to require attendance for the whole period, at least, during which schools are required to be maintained, believing that attendance upon the schools should be compulsory for the child for the same term in which the maintenance of the school is compulsory for the tax-payers. Since the only hope of security and prosperity for a republic rests in the virtuous intelligence of its citizens, the rightfulness of compulsory education is generally admitted. *Salus populi suprema lex.* The necessity of enforcing this right arises from the existence in our community of a large and growing class of persons, not only ignorant themselves, but only too willing to keep their children in ignorance for the sake of the pittance which may be earned by unskilled juvenile labor."

From New York comes the voice in regard to the crying evil of absenteeism: "There is no remedy that I know of but compulsory attendance." The Superintendent of pub-

lic schools declares that "the primary object of the State, in bestowing free education upon its citizens, is not to benefit individuals as such, but to qualify them properly for their relations and duties to each other as members of the same community." The Superintendent of the schools in Maine has put the argument into this form: "The power which compels the citizen to pay his annual tax for the support of schools should, in like manner, fill the schools with all of those for whose benefit that contribution was made. It is in the light of a solemn compact between the citizen and the State community. The private citizen contributes of his means, under the established rule of the State, for the education of the youth, with a view to protection of person and security to property; the State compelling such contributions, is under reciprocal obligation to provide and secure the complete education, for which the contribution has been made. This implies the exercise of State power, and involves compulsory attendance as a duty to the taxpayer. The State builds prisons and penitentiaries for the protection of society, and taxes society for the same. But does she stop here, leaving him who has violated the law to be pursued by the community in a mass; to be apprehended by a crowd and borne by a throng to the place of incarceration? No; she pursues the criminal through legitimate instrumentalities, ferrets him out by the sharpest means of detection, and eventually secures that safety and protection to society for which society has been taxed. Now, to prevent crime, to anticipate and shut it off by proper compulsory efforts in the school-room, working with and moulding early childhood and youth 'to the principles of morality and justice, and a sacred regard for truth, love of country, humanity, and a universal benevolence, sobriety, industry and frugality, chastity, moderation and temper-

ance, and all other virtues which are the ornaments of society' [cited from the Constitution of Maine], the State not only has the right to inaugurate such methods as may be deemed best, but is under strict obligation to do so by all the means in her power."

The world is moving! Shall Pennsylvania remain behind?

CLASSIFICATION OF THE EVIL.

The evil to be remedied is multiform. The absentees from the schools may be distributed into various classes. There are absentees from the public schools, who are provided at least with an elementary education at home, or in private or charitable institutions. Of these nothing further is required but the ascertainment of this fact; and their case is then to be entirely set aside from any idea of compulsion or control.

For the rest, among the absentees from the schools, are:

1. Children living in the streets, without guardianship or supervision, and without employment, except such as they may choose or chance to pick up for themselves.

2. Children employed in manufacturing drudgery, not only in great cotton or woolen manufactories, but who are crowded into cellars and garrets, and cramped and comfortless rooms; working, for example, in manipulating tobacco, and in all sorts of simple drudgery.

3. Children, in the city, kept at home by their parents to run errands or help them in their daily toil, trade or business; as about grocers' shops or butchers' stalls, or other purely unimproving occupation equivalent to idleness, at home.

4. Children in the country, kept, from their earliest years, constantly employed in agricultural labors.

OUTLINES OF THE REMEDY PROPOSED.

It is necessary for the best interests of the State, and of the children themselves, that, at least, an elementary education should be secured to all these classes; but it is not equally necessary for all. For the first class it is most necessary, and its importance diminishes in the order of enumeration, until the last class, in which it is least important. For, *any* honest employment, consistent with health, is better than idle vagabondage; and the knowledge of some trade, or of agriculture (which is the healthiest employment of all for a child, both morally and physically), is even more important towards making a good citizen, than a knowledge of reading, writing or arithmetic.

The truant and employment laws of Massachusetts, with some fuller provisions, might answer for the remedy in case of the first and second classes. Of the first class, the attendance at school should be required and secured absolutely; and for those among them entirely destitute of homes and means of support, proper refuges, maintenance and guardianship should be provided at the public expense. The safety of the community demands it; the economy of the tax-payer requires it; for it is, in the end, the cheapest way by which the case can be disposed of, and the only way to make the tax already paid effectual to accomplish its object.

And it is to be remembered that, though this form of the evil may be largely local, its dangerous consequences and the interest in having it remedied are not local. The character of great cities exerts a powerful, and often a sadly controlling influence on the country, near and remote. They may be fountains of blessing to a State, or they may be sources of wide-spread corruption, nests of iniquity, festering sores upon the body politic. The children that

grow up neglected in the city do not always remain there. They may carry the pestilential influence of their vices all over the State. While, if they were rescued from ruin, trained up in useful knowledge and moral habits, they would almost certainly be found, in large proportion, distributed over the whole area of the State, rendering efficient assistance in the development of its resources and the elevation of its character. Their education, therefore, concerns not only the city wherein they are found, but the whole Commonwealth.

The safety of the State may not be so much imperiled by the neglect of the second class, as of the first; but, in point of fact, an almost equal positive loss of wealth, *i. e.*, of productive labor, is incurred. Besides, it is permitting outrageous cruelty to the children; and if the State, by solemn enactment, may provide for the prevention of cruelty to animals, though inflicted by the poorest man in the very act of earning his daily bread, will she not provide for the prevention of cruelty to her own children, however the necessities of the parents may seem to justify or excuse it? In these cases, the parents or employers should be absolutely required, under appropriate penalties, to send the children to school a certain portion of the year, until they have acquired at least those rudiments of knowledge which should be adjudged by statute to constitute the minimum of an elementary education. If obedience to such a law is refused, and if, from the poverty of the parties, or from whatever cause, the penalties cannot be enforced, then, as in the former case, the State should interpose, and take the care and maintenance of the children into its own hands. To provide for their maintenance, by compelling them to devote to manual and exhausting labor that childhood which should be devoted

to the studies and recreations of school, is, in the end, the most expensive way to the State in which it could be provided for.

Of the third and fourth classes, the attendance at school might be required by a similar process with similar provisions, and for similar, though at least in the fourth class, not equally imperative reasons. Such is a general outline of a remedy proposed for the great evil in question. But it meets with many

OBJECTIONS.

1. "It would interfere with personal liberty." So does the imposition of military service or training. So does the requisition to serve on juries or to aid the sheriff in the *posse comitatus*. So does the law abating nuisances or making it penal to sell certain articles without a license. If the safety and welfare of the State are sufficient reasons for those interferences with personal liberty, why should not the same be sufficient reasons in the other and more urgent case? Indeed, we might as well admit it to be a part of the personal liberty of the citizen to get drunk, or go naked in the streets, or set fire to his house, or starve his family, as to have children, and that he may use them only for his own accommodation, or in mere wantonness, to cast them upon the community, in vicious ignorance and sottish imbecility. If the law may restrain a man from cruelly beating his horse or his mule, shall it be considered an insufferable interference with his personal liberty to forbid his dwarfing the minds, debasing the morals, stunting the bodies and enfeebling the constitutions of his children? Is the State more interested in the care of oxen than of men?

2. "It would be an interference with the rights of conscience."

So may be the imposition of military service, or the requisition of personal aid to the sheriff; but this case need involve no such interference at all, unless men have a conscientious repugnance to children's being taught to read and write, and to lead moral and virtuous lives, instead of being left to grow up in ignorance and vice. And, even as for religious instruction, it would be to assume a strange position to say, "the instructor may teach the children that 'twice two are four;' he may even say, 'be temperate and chaste,' but I have conscientious scruples against his saying, 'obey the commandments of Almighty God.'" Still, all formal religious instruction or exercises in the schools that children are required to attend, including, under that category, even the reading of the Holy Scriptures, if so it is insisted upon, may be confined to certain prescribed periods at the opening or close of the school-day; and all children may be excused from attendance at those periods, whose parents or guardians should expressly desire it.

3. "The State is not a benevolent institution, or association for moral reform."

. But the State has its almshouses; it aids in the support of institutions for the deaf and dumb, the blind, the feeble-minded; it aids in establishing and in sustaining houses of refuge and schools of reform for the youthful victims of neglect, incorrigibility or vice. Its Legislature has its standing Committee on Vice and Immorality, and has constituted this commission as its "Board of Public Charities." Surely it will hardly be urged as a proper reason against a legal enactment, that it will do some good; that it will tend to accomplish even the highest ends of benevolence and morality. But here it is the very safety and welfare of the State that are appealed to, as the

proper object of the proposed legislation. To prevent vice and crime by removing their causes, and thus to prevent their consequences of poverty, and misery, and shame, of injury and loss to society, is quite as consistent with the proper functions of the State, as to punish them after they have borne their fruits.

4. "It would vastly increase the cost and burden of the public schools."

If it should do so, it would still be only as the necessary means of securing the "education of the poor," for which it is the constitutional duty of the Legislature to provide. But it would probably not increase the cost of the schools nearly so much as it might be supposed or apprehended, while it might be made greatly to increase their general efficiency. It is to be assumed that school accommodations are already provided, sufficient for all the children of school-age in the Commonwealth. But even if it were necessary to reserve or supply separate schools for those children who do not now attend school at all, and if to these were added the incorrigibly truant, and the unreasonably absent from the other schools, together with those who, for misbehavior or negligence, are expelled from them, it would only leave more room in the other schools for the wants of an increasing population, and would, in the long run, involve only a change in the *distribution* of the whole number of children. The result would, in fact, be that the average attendance in the other schools would be much raised; the conduct and industry of the pupils would be improved; and, in the end, the number to be provided for in the separate school would be very small indeed. And as to the meagre remnant of extremely destitute children, which would be, we believe, continually reduced under the system we pro-

pose, for whom maintenance as well as instruction would have to be provided, it is not easy to see how the State can decline the duty of making the provision, or why, while it has its numerous asylums of kindred character, it should *seek* to decline it. We think, therefore, that the expense would not be "vastly" increased; but whatever the cost would be, it ought to be cheerfully met.

5. "It would encourage reckless marriages, and the reckless idleness and wastefulness of parents."

This is the sort of objection that has been made, and may continue to be made against all relief afforded to the poor and wretched. There is an abuse to be guarded against, but it is not to be guarded against by leaving the destitute and miserable to rot and perish; but only by giving the relief in such judicious ways and degrees as to avoid abuses as far as possible. The same good judgment should be exercised in this case. But the objection is the less applicable here, because the natural and proper effect of the legislation proposed would be, on the whole, to diminish poverty and wretchedness, as well as ignorance, vice and crime. Meantime it does not appear that the evil consequence alleged has actually followed where education has been made universally compulsory, whether in Sweden, in Norway, or in Germany.

6. "Merely to learn to read and write will not make better citizens, or diminish crime."

Here it is to be observed, first of all, that the practical alternative is not, as is often invidiously suggested, between a knowledge of reading and writing on the one hand, and habits of morality and religion, or a knowledge of a trade on the other; but between so much knowledge as is involved in reading and writing and no education at all; between so much knowledge as that or blank ignorance, or a training only in habits of vice and crime.

In the second place, so far from its being true that such a modicum of learning, or any amount of knowledge, is naturally associated with immorality, the plain fact is, that there is a natural affinity between knowledge and good morals; between the normal culture of the intellect and of the heart; between truth and rectitude; and that a knowledge of reading and writing increases both the means and the tendency to acquire both the knowledge and the habits of virtue and good morals. This is the general law, and the dissociation of knowledge from virtue, the perversion of knowledge to the aid and development of vice and iniquity, which it is true may sometimes happen, and which has happened in some notorious and terrible examples, is one of the most monstrous abuses known in human experience.

But, in the third place, it is not proposed that these children should be taught to read and write to the exclusion of all moral or religious instruction. The public schools of Pennsylvania are neither immoral nor godless schools. Ninety-nine in a hundred of the teachers are, and would continue to be, moral, and nine-tenths of them religious persons. Moral and religious instruction and training would be given, radiating constantly in an unconscious influence from the person, bearing and example of the teacher; from the very air and order of the school room; and in formal lessons, too, and special exercises, with such rare exceptions for weak consciences as have been before referred to. Moreover, we here add, that all the time, if any, besides Sundays and Saturdays, which any parents may require for their children to receive actual religious instruction from their own religious teachers, would be freely accorded to them. The Church or the Churches, and any benevolent, moral, and religious associa-

tions or persons, are, and will be, of course, at perfect liberty to give to these neglected children, now in question, not only moral and religious instruction, but as full an education, in all respects, as they please. The State will not interfere with them. The State, in her school system, does not interfere with the Church at all. The Church is, and always has been, and always will be, while the fundamental principles of our civil and social polity remain what they are, at perfect liberty to educate in religion, morals, and every kind of learning, all the children in the State, if she will, and if she can induce them to receive her instructions. Of course the State will not, and cannot consistently, compel the attendance of the children upon such schools. The Church is at as full liberty to do all she will and can, *with* the State system of public schools, even including the feature of compulsory attendance (for this feature is never applied to children who receive sufficient instruction elsewhere); the Church has, *with all this*, just as full and free scope for all her benevolent activities, as she ever had or could have, with no State schools whatever. The Church has had her opportunity, without these latter schools, falsely and slanderously styled "godless," and with immense revenues and means in her hands—means and revenues, in many cases, bestowed upon her for this very purpose—in Spain, in Italy, in Portugal, in the States of South America, and even in England; and what has been the result as to the education of the masses of the poorer and of the so-called lower classes of the community? In many cases, as in Sweden, she seems to have been positively principled against their education. The "Church" has reason to hide her head in silent shame or humble confession at her own neglect, rather than to carp at the State for its imperfect efforts to supply her lack of

service, to remedy, as it may, the consequences of her unfaithfulness. The State not only leaves the Church at liberty to act for herself and in her own way, but invites her, and invites all good men, to render their aid in this work so fraught with beneficence towards its particular objects, as well as interwoven with the necessary conditions of the public welfare. And it is no small encouragement to the efforts of the State in this direction, to believe and expect, as we have good reason to do, that those efforts will be seconded, and their expense greatly curtailed, not only by the spontaneous favor of public opinion, but by the systematic aid of Christian benevolence, in furnishing homes and refuges, as well as a good training, to many of these children of neglect and want.

In the fourth place, if by "good citizens" is meant useful, productive members of society, it is not pretended that *all* which is of importance to make men such is to teach them to read and write; and if the State is disposed and can afford to secure to these children the knowledge of some trade or handicraft *also*, so much the better. Meantime, the mere knowing how to read and write tends, and powerfully tends, in the right direction; tends towards making men useful and productive citizens; tends, therefore, to increase the wealth and prosperity of the State, and thus to repay, and more than repay, all that it may have cost. Abundant evidence on this head has been collected by the United States Commissioner of Education, and published in his report for 1870, pp. 439-467. The following questions were submitted to a great number and variety of competent witnesses:—

1. Have you observed a difference in skill, aptitude and amount of work executed by persons you have employed, arising from a difference in their education, and independent of natural abilities?

2. Do those who can *merely* read and write, and who merely possess those rudiments of an education, other things being equal, show any greater skill and fidelity as laborers, skilled or unskilled, or as artisans, than do those who are not able to read and write? and, if so, how much would such additional skill, etc., tend to increase the productiveness of their services, and, consequently, their wages?

The answers to these questions all tend to establish the point that the mere ability to read and write, by even an unskilled laborer, adds, on an average, from twenty-five to fifty per cent. to his value and efficiency.

Similar questions were propounded to large numbers of intelligent workmen, and of observers, who were neither employers nor workmen, and all with the same result.

It cannot be doubted, therefore, that the wealth of the State would be greatly promoted by giving at least a rudimentary education to those thousands of her children who are now suffered to grow up in ignorance and neglect.

In the fifth place, that the merely knowing how to read and write is to some extent a preservative from crime, is evident from the State prison statistics already given, from which it appears that if all in the State were taught to read and write, the number of criminals would be diminished nearly ten per cent. The consequence would be a great pecuniary saving, though one can hardly bring himself to mention this by the side of the immense moral gain.

7. "The evil complained of is very slight in the rural portions of the State."

If so, then all the other objections, for this case, proportionally lose their weight; then, its remedy could interfere but little with personal liberty or the rights of conscience; it could subject the State in but a slight degree to the

charge of philanthropy ; it could cost but little, and could not much encourage reckless marriages or extravagant living, nor could it much increase the exposure of the State schools to the charge of immorality and ungodliness, or inutility and impotence.

The remedy is, doubtless, more needed in cities and crowded communities than it is in sparsely settled and agricultural portions of the country ; but we think that we have shown that its beneficial influences would not be confined to these districts of dense population, but that they would be widespread and general, and that we have also demonstrated that in the less thickly settled districts it is not impracticable, nor likely to work any evil, but rather that it will be productive of good and only good, as is proved by the experience of Prussia, and Sweden, and Norway, in which latter country it has been in full operation for more than forty years.

CONCLUSION.

From a review, therefore, of the whole case, the Board cannot but earnestly recommend as a remedy for this, one of the greatest, most painful and most threatening evils that exist among us, the enactment of a general law of *compulsory education*, or as near an approximation to it as the Legislature, in its wisdom, shall deem expedient and practicable ; any necessary increase of expenditure to be met either by appropriations from the State Treasury or by local taxation, or by both.

NOTE.—Commissioner Clymer dissented from the views expressed in this paper.







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